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#0, October

VANTAGE™

Information for the Serious Comic Book Investor

GOTCHA!

Vantage captures JUICY Defiant info that NO ONE ELSE HAS!

Two Ultraverse Exclusives:

PRIME #4 Why are these books SPECIAL? **EXILES #3**

ONLY VANTAGE KNOWS!

JIM SHOOTER INTERVIEW:

- The Plasm Album!
- Why did Shooter leave Valiant?
- Chris Claremont at Defiant!

PLUS:

- Inside Valiant news!
- Defiant/Triumphant cross-over!
- Quesada's next project!
- Suspended Animation: Comics for reading!

WILL "LEGEND" BE THE NEXT IMAGE?

Defiant Logo TM & © 1993 Enlightened Entertainment, Ltd.

WIN A PLASM ALBUM!!!

(AND SEALED BOX OF PLASM CARDS)

We want you to help us spread the word about how cool Vantage is! Just fill out the coupon below, have your local store fill out their half, and send it in FAST! Hey, the odds are in your favor, because how many people are really going to bring this coupon back to their comic store and bug the guy behind the counter with it? If you win you'll get the Plasm Album, a box of Plasm cards, and the VANTAGE GIANT NOTHING (what?)! Plus, you'll see your name printed in Vantage! Wild!

READ THE RULES: 1) Surprise, surprise, no purchase is necessary. 2) To win, you must send in an entry (coupon) filled out by two people: The top gets filled out by YOU. The bottom gets filled out by the guy sitting behind the counter at your local comic shop. 3) You may send in your entry on another piece of paper, or on a photocopy of the coupon. 4) Send as many Plasm Album contest entries as you want, but each contestant may send in only one per store. The store does not have to carry Vantage. 5) One entry selected at random will win both the Album and the cards. You can mail your entries to us all in the same envelope, so feel free to hit every store in your city. Entries that are not signed by an actual store employee will be disqualified. Entries that are not 100% filled out and complete will be disqualified.

YOU KNOW THE RULES. YOU KNOW THE PRIZE.

YOU COULD WIN:
A 1st PRINT PLASM BINDER, A BOX OF PLASM CARDS . . .
AND THE INFAMOUS VANTAGE GIANT NOTHING!!!

To be filled out by you:

Name:_____ Phone: ( ) _____

Address:_____ City, State and ZIP _____

To be filled out by a comic store employee, owner, or manager:

Store Name:_____ City and State:_____

"I certify that I really do work for a comic store and that I really do want my customer to win free stuff."

Employee Name:_____ Employee Signature:_____

On a scale from one to five (FIVE IS BEST), does your customer like Vantage?

__5 __4 __3 __2 __1

What does your customer like about Vantage? _____

RETAILER: Vantage is the new publication on comic book investing! We have a great track record of picks (e.g., Bloodshot #6, Shadowman #16, Knightfall #11, Plasm Binder), we encourage sales, we are very pro-reading, and we give your customer the chance to spend his money more wisely! Many of your customers are readers who prefer to read the books that are more likely to go up — that way they feel they have gotten more for their money. Vantage can be an invaluable resource for these reader/collectors!!! Vantage! Look for us in your distributor's catalog!

VANTAGE

Mail to: Vantage PLASM CONTEST,
Suite #166,
10238 West National Avenue,
West Allis, WI 53227

This entry should be mailed by the contestant, not the comic store!

VANTAGE ADVISORS

Below are some of our advisors. We'll print more names next month. These are top professionals in the comic book industry who really know their stuff. The opinions expressed in Vantage are not necessarily those of our advisors.

Karen Boyd
A.B. Tales
(615) 826-0209
New comics weekly - all publishers - advance orders - pull/hold service

Paul Davis and Mike Collins
Butler Comic and Sportscard Shoppe
(412) 283-0074
119 E. North St. Butler, PA 16001

Danielle Fritz
Centerville Comic Connection
(513) 436-3003
Centerville, OH
We give personal attention to your collecting needs.

Regan Clem
Clem's Collectibles
Box 694 316 S. Main
Antwerp, OH 45813

Special thanks to Rembert Parker, one of Florida's #1 back-issue dealers, for his great help with recent issues:

Rembert Parker
Reader Copies
(904) 221-7658
Buy, sell, trade new/pre-owned comics
(1962-present)

FALL 1993 MARKET REPORT

If this is your first issue of **Vantage** then you've come to the right place. Guess what? We don't fool around. This is where you get your Grade A, 100% USDA Prime information. We're not just another guide. We're the world's first newsletter/magazine for the serious comic book investor.

Our readers are all sorts of people. Some are *store owners* and *comic dealers*. They **NEED Vantage** to better run their businesses. Still others are *investors* who enjoy the challenge of the marketplace! Also, a great many of you are *collectors!* You love to read comics, but since there are so many good ones to choose from these days, you'd rather read the ones that are more likely to go up in value! (Makes sense!) Well, whatever category you fit in, **welcome to comics' best kept secret — the Vantage Advantage!**

Vantage cuts through all the hype. We arm our readers to the teeth with as much information as possible. That way, when you go our into the marketplace to do battle, you're ready 'cause you're on TEAM VANTAGE! The fact is, the other mags' "top ten" lists look like our pick lists from two to six months ago!

On to the picks . . . This month, a few of our picks are slightly higher profile books than usual. We're making an exception because it's Fall '93. One thing's for sure . . . Fall 1993 sure ain't Fall 1992.

Recent issues of Valiant and Image have slowed somewhat in the marketplace, leaving some investors unsure. People are becoming cautious. They will advance-order low now on Valiant, Image, and everything else. This is good. Remember that comic publishers print about as much as stores and other advance-orderers will order. With the fantastic array of masterful storytelling and beautiful artwork now coming at us from every direction, many of the items that are now being ordered in lower quantities could soon be riding high. **These low print-run jewels would be in serious demand.** Without a doubt, now is the time to be in comics.

VANTAGE INVESTMENT PICK

Top Picks of the Month

Vortex #1 (Dark Horse)
Dark Dominion #1 (Defiant)

More Vantage Investment Picks

Prime #4 (Malibu)
Sludge #1 (Malibu)
Ultraverse, all titles (Malibu)
Comics' Greatest World, all titles (Dark Horse)
Warriors of Plasm #3 (Defiant)
Dr. Chaos #1 (Triumphant)
Dark Horse Comics #51 (Dark Horse)
Concrete #1 and **Dark Horse Comics Presents** #1 (Dark Horse back-issues)
Solar #28-29 (Valiant)

Watch for the Vantage Star indicating our top picks!

"The above pick list is a guide based on research, advisors' opinions, and staff opinions - keep in mind that even the experts will disagree. "Hot" comics can lose value after months or years. You would be wise to trade or sell books before they lose value. Read over the facts and opinions in Vantage, examine the pick list, and then make your own investment decisions. Remember: 1) There's no sure thing. Never bet the farm on any one book. 2) Comics may be fun to invest in, but they're even more fun to read! Open up one of those sealed polybags and give comics a try!"

- Publisher Rob Golub

Publisher, Rob Golub Editor, Tracy Willems. Art Director, Steve Reid. Assistant Editor, Steve Asvitt.

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THE DEFIANT/TRIUMPHANT CROSS-OVER

This is big. War Dancer, a Defiant character, will make his first appearance in a Triumphant comic book! That's right, a smaller, lesser-known comic publisher has obtained the rights to publish a comic with the first cameo appearance of a Defiant character. To top it off, this Defiant character is scheduled to get his own Defiant series in February of 1994!

Only Vantage has managed to obtain the details on this from key inside sources. Gee, we really liked the sound of that. Let's hear it again. **Only Vantage has managed to obtain the details on this from key inside sources.**

Here's the scoop. Triumphant is the new fantasy/sci-fi universe from Corporate Kingdom Holdings. We've read advance copies of some of the first few issues from Triumphant and we've enjoyed them greatly.

Triumphant was launched in July; there will be a Triumphant intra-company cross-over called "Triumphant Unleashed" in November and December. The middle center-spread of each book in the cross-over will interlock to form a giant panel. The panel, when complete, will feature a really humongous picture of a whole bunch of stuff floating around Dr. Chaos and War Dancer. Dr. Chaos, a central character in Triumphant's Universe, will be **shaking hands with Defiant's War Dancer.** Chaos will be in one center-spread and War Dancer will be in another. The giant panel DOES fit into the story, though it is being billed as a "non-cross-over cross-over." YES, War Dancer will appear in only one center-spread out of the twelve that interlock! It is **this book**, featuring the very first appearance of War Dancer, that will have **truly strong investment potential! Yummy!**

Shooter: "War Dancer as it evolved became so critical to the universe. He's a character who's really a lynch pin. War Dancer is the bridge between Plasm and Earth here and now. War Dancer is to Defiant as Solar, Man of the Atom was to Valiant when I was there."

IMPORTANT: Vantage is now making arrangements to acquire information regarding which Triumphant book will actually feature War Dancer. Our sources tell us that they should have this information to us in time for our next monthly issue, **Vantage #5.** If you pick up **Vantage** when it first comes out you will have enough time to advance order the War Dancer cameo! **To our knowledge, Vantage will be the only place you can get this information.** Gee, we really liked the sound of that.

In the meantime, **Vantage has already learned which issue of Triumpant Unleashed will feature Dr. Chaos and at least part of War Dancer's hand.** This will be **Dr. Chaos #1.** This book has strong investment potential and it is available for advance-order through your retailer now. It is scheduled to be in most stores in November of 1993. We expect that this book will be very rare, since most of you will cautiously under-order just in case we here at **Vantage** are insane. Our sanity aside, we know what we're talking about. **Store owners (except for those wise enough to read Vantage) will not be aware of Dr. Chaos #1's importance when they place their orders.** For those of you who just finished your first Vantage article, now you know we're not just another hot-book-of-the-month hype machine.

Triumphant Logo and Dr. Chaos #1 cover artwork TM & © 1993 Triumphant Comics

"We expect that this book will be very rare, since most of you will cautiously under-order just in case we here at Vantage are insane."

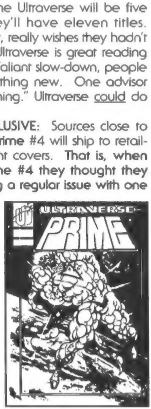
DOCTOR CHAOS™

ULTRAVERSE: ONLY VANTAGE KNOWS!

Advisors are reporting from around the nation that the Ultraverse is heating up. The first back-issues are already going for double cover or more in some areas. Stores are reporting that they severely under-ordered the first few months of Ultraverse. The entire industry was taken by surprise! NOT — Vantage is the only publication that had the courage to list the Ultraverse books as "investment picks" from day one.

Of course, the show's not over yet, for the company could still drown itself in a sea of too many titles. Valiant had slowly built itself up over the past two years to a total of thirteen titles, so as not to hit fans with too much all at once. In October the Ultraverse will be five months old and they'll have eleven titles. Ouch. **Vantage** really, really wishes they hadn't done that. Still, the Ultraverse is great reading and with the Image/Valiant slow-down, people are looking for something new. One advisor noted, "It's perfect timing." Ultraverse could do very well.

A VANTAGE EXCLUSIVE: Sources close to Malibu indicate that **Prime** #4 will ship to retailers with TWO different covers. **That is, when retailers ordered Prime #4 they thought they would only be getting a regular issue with one cover.** In fact, our inside sources tell us that half of the **Prime** #4's will feature a cover with Prime standing triumphant over Prototype! The other half will feature Prototype having beaten Prime! Given the general excitement over Ultraverse now building, **these two covers could do very nicely. Prime #4 is due out now.**



RETAILERS DIDN'T KNOW: We here at **Vantage** believe that a key to back-issue value is providing unsolicited benefits to customers. For example no one knew that **Bloodshot** #6 would have the first appearance of Ninjak. The appearance was unsolicited (that is, store owners didn't know about it when they placed their orders), so orders were lower than they would have been. Relative rarity plus demand propelled **Bloodshot** #6 to its current level of success. In this regard Malibu is starting to move along on the right track, like with **Prime** #4 (see above). The same can be said for **Exiles** #3. Stores were not aware of this when they placed their orders, but inside sources indicate that **Exiles #3 will feature the death of a major character. Exiles #3 is due out in October and it will be one of the books featuring an installment from Rune.**

Barry Windsor-Smith, formerly with Valiant, has now joined the Ultraverse. He'll be penciling and co-writing **Rune**. Windsor-Smith is a top-notch creator. His artwork is uniquely beautiful and graceful and we expect reaction to his work in Ultraverse to be strong. His career spans three decades, starting with **Conan the Barbarian** from Marvel (some very pricey back issues). Rune will be the story of an immortal energy vampire who feeds on those around him and has done so for hundreds of years.

"Given the general excitement over Ultraverse now building, these two covers could do very nicely"

The Rune vampire character will be introduced in an 11-part story that runs throughout each of the Ultraverse titles in October. Each installment will be three pages with a **Rune** flip cover. Collect all eleven and you'll have all the coupons you need for **Rune** #0 (which will reprint the eleven installments). This story is the prelude to the **Rune** series due out in January 1994. The first chapter, and thus first appearance of Rune, will be **Sludge** #1. Future **Rune** collectors will be hunting for this book.

Perhaps even more important, with the Ultraverse heating up, the market is looking for a few central Ultraverse books to focus on. The market prefers a few hot books to a whole hot universe, at least at first. **Sludge** #1 can fit the bill.

Sludge and Prime TM & © 1993 Malibu Comics Entertainment, Inc.

COMICS' GREATEST WORLD:

WILL VORTEX #1 BE OVER-ORDERED?

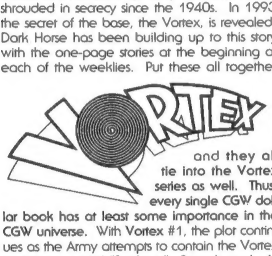
Last issue we told you of that the following Comics' Greatest World characters would be getting a comic series: X, Catalyst, Barb Wire, and Vortex (only **Vortex** will be a twelve-issue series — the rest will be continuous).

Several months ago we made **Dark Horse Comics** #8 (first X) a **Top Investment Pick of the Month**. It has since shot up in value! Last month we made the other three first appearances **Top Investment Picks of the Month** as well: **Catalyst** (Week 4 of Golden City), **Vortex** (Week 4 of Vortex), and **Barb Wire** (Week 1 of Steel Harbor).

This month Vantage has learned what the print runs are on two of these books thanks to inside sources. We've discovered the runs are about 150,000 and 175,000 on **Barb Wire** (Week 1 of Steel Harbor) and **Catalyst** (Week 4 of Golden City) respectively. These are nice low-to-moderate runs for investment purposes. **Vantage** likes it. We'd also like to point out that while **Catalyst** (Week 4 of Golden City) is the origin of the Catalyst team, the members of the team appeared previously in other Golden City books. These books have a nice shot too.

This month Dark Horse offers only one CGW book: **Vortex** #1. Be careful not to confuse this with the numberless **Vortex** (Week 4 of Vortex). **Vortex** #1 picks up where the CGW four week **Vortex** series left off. **Sources indicate that the new Vortex series will play a very important role in the development of the Comics' Greatest World universe.**

In the **Vortex** four week series we'll be introduced to a Nevada U.S. Army base that's been shrouded in secrecy since the 1940s. In 1993 the secret of the base, the Vortex, is revealed. Dark Horse has been building up to this story with the one-page stories at the beginning of each of the weeklies. Put these all together



and they all tie into the **Vortex** series as well. Thus, every single CGW dollar book has at least some importance in the CGW universe. With **Vortex** #1, the plot continues as the Army attempts to contain the Vortex and those weird "Seekers." Sounds cool. In fact, sources close to Dark Horse indicate that **Vortex** #1 picks up **exactly one second after the last issue of the Vortex sixteen-week series.** Mmmmm. **Vantage** loves tight continuity.

Will **Vortex** #1 be over-ordered? Probably not. The market is jittery right now and people are holding onto their money, waiting to see what happens. Remember, most people prefer to buy when a market is riding high — the most common investment mistake (that's the mistake that created the **Turok Scare** we told you about in **Vantage** #3). Also, Dark Horse has not promoted this series very heavily, putting the whole thing largely in the hands of reader and speculator demand. Apparently their philosophy is that they took a hit on the buck-a-book promotion to get the whole thing

"Vortex #1 picks up exactly one second after the last issue of the Vortex sixteen-week series."

started and now it's time for Comics' Greatest World to start paying for some of its own bills. **Sources indicate that promotion will increase with time.**

We don't expect the print run of the first few issues of the new **Vortex** limited series to go **very much higher** than the runs of the weekly $1.00 books. This is good. As Dark Horse builds their new Comics' Greatest World Universe, the earlier under-printed issues will have **strong potential to gain value.**

Vortex Logo and related artwork TM & © 1993 Dark Horse Comics

"DINOSAURS": THE NEXT IMAGE?

No, no, this is not another Jurassic Park sales-pitch. Long before McDonald's started selling Jurassic plastic, the rumor mill had predicted that a group of seasoned "hot" artists would start a group called "dinosaurs." These self-proclaimed dinosaurs will be published under the imprint, "Legend." This will be a division of Dark Horse Comics, the nice people behind Comics' Greatest World. Dark Horse has indicated to **Vantage** that Legend will be promoted and advertised very heavily.

Currently scheduled dinosaurs: Walt Simonson, Art Adams, Mike Mignola, Geoff Darrow, John Byrne, Paul Chadwick, and Frank Miller. That's quite a cast. **This is no small event. Vantage** thinks Legend is a great idea. This brand name should quickly become associated with the best in comics, and interest in all Legend work should jump dramatically. The cross-marketing potential is enormous. For example, people who like John Byrne may now discover Paul Chadwick for the first time, since both will be under the Legend imprint.

Of course, Legend books will most likely never have twelve zillion crazy groupies, nor mega-hype in the big industry mags. So we don't quite expect another Image. Still, Legend will bring us fantastic reading **and some of the Legend titles will have excellent investment potential. The best part: Thanks to the high quality of each title, these books will have excellent stability in the marketplace.**

Our inside sources have provided us with some of the details. Legend will not be a universe, though some characters may cross-over from time to time. Rather, Legend is a band of seven guys who admire and respect each other's work. Unlike Image, Legend does not intend to make itself available to new members for at least a couple years. Legend was the brainchild of John Byrne and Frank Miller.

The first offering from Legend will be a six-issue sequel to Frank Miller's awesome **Sin City**. If you haven't read **Sin City** or Miller in general then you haven't read comics. This guy pretty much invented dark and gritty comics, and he still does them far better than anyone. **Previews** #9 features a **Sin City** cover, and the **Sin City** sequel will be heavily hyped. This sequel is sure to create demand for the original **Sin City** story which ran through **Dark Horse Comics** #51-62. Of course, #51 has the greatest potential since it kicks off **Sin City**.

Frank Miller and Geoff Darrow will also be putting together a silly 1950s-style robots book called **The Big Guy and Rusty the Boy Robot.** Frank Miller and Dave Gibbons will be working on a sequel to the **Give Me Liberty** mini series called **Martha Washington Goes to War.** The Martha Washington character's first appearance: **Give Me Liberty** #1.

Concrete, possibly the best in reading that comics has to offer, will be continued under the Legend imprint as a new mini-series. If you've never read **Concrete** we strongly suggest you try it. **Concrete** will also be appearing in a series of shorts running through **Dark Horse Presents. Concrete** is so well done that even an occasional mini keeps collectors hunting for those rare back-issues. The Legend imprint will only help. Nice investment potential: the old **Concrete #1** and **Dark Horse Presents #1** with Concrete's first appearance.

Art Adams is scheduled to do a book called **Monkey Man and O'Brian.** Really. Mike Mignola will work on something called **Hell Boy.** Look for a whole bunch of **Next Men** minis from John Byrne. **Vantage** will be watching Legend very closely. In fact, **Vantage** will be watching everything very closely. Hey, that's our job!

"Legend was the brainchild of John Byrne and Frank Miller."

Legend TM & © 1993 Dark Horse Comics

TOUGH QUESTIONS:

DEFIANT ANSWERS!

We caught up with Jim Shooter in his New York office. The man who helped to build Marvel, founded Valiant, and launched Defiant was kind enough to fit us into his schedule. You'll see none of this "what kind of kid were you" filler here at Vantage. As always, we'll get right to the good stuff . . .

The Plasm Binder Fiasco

Many store-owners were, well, really annoyed that they received fewer **Plasm** Binders than they had ordered. Many blamed Shooter. Shooter insists that he is an innocent bystander.

Shooter: "Yes, we did the creative work, but the sales and marketing of the product is up to The River Group." The River Group had been granted an exclusive license by Defiant to manufacture the card set and the album.

Shooter says that Diamond Distributors (a major middleman between comic stores and the comic publishers) and the River Group had a misunderstanding. "In one of the meetings between The River Group and Diamond, limiting the album to 15,000 was discussed." Diamond came away from the meetings with the impression that the Album would be limited to 15,000. Shooter says The River Group did not realize that they had given Diamond this impression. When Diamond printed that there was a 15,000 quantity limit in their **Previews** catalog (which thousands of retailers use to order comics from Diamond), the misunderstanding came to light. What a mess.

Shooter reflected on it all, "I thought well, okay, we probably won't get more than 15,000. But then orders came in for like 115,000." To make matters worse, other distributors (middlemen) had not limited the album to 15,000 in their catalogs so their store-owner customers were expecting their full orders.

Shooter suggested to The River Group that they "print to order and offer it returnable. It was their call." After The River Group decided make 15,000 first prints followed by a reprint, "I said fine and I tried my best to help them get it out. The River Group was entirely new to the comic book business and they just didn't know how it would play."

The Plasm Cards

There's also been some controversy surrounding the decision to reprint the cards in Diamond's **Previews**. Some dealers feared this would inhibit card sales. Shooter insists his only motivation was to build readership. At the time, "it all sounded very reasonable." Shooter says that Diamond liked the idea and "I thought, well, Diamond would never do anything to screw their own retailers." For both Diamond and Defiant, Shooter explains, "When you keep trying to do new things you'll occasionally make mistakes. Upsetting people like this on purpose is the last thing in the world I would do."

Chris Claremont's Role at Defiant

"Pretty early on we signed up Chris to help build the universe. He has been attending our creative meetings and working as a consulting editor. He has limited time right now because he has a huge commitment to write a novel in a fairly short time. His first issue will probably be involved at the beginning of next year." **Vantage** will keep a close eye on Claremont and Defiant since we attribute so much of the **X-Men**'s past success to Claremont's leave-'em-hanging writing style.

Plasm TM & © 1993 Enlightened Entertainment, Ltd.

SHOOTER!

Leaving Valiant

Shooter says that he was pushed out of Valiant when two of the other owners of Valiant became husband and wife. "After the company started making money and started to turn the corner and doing very well, they came up with a plan to sell Voyager to the wife's brother and a group of investors from a company called Allen & Company. It would have been very, very good for them and very, very bad for me. Under the terms of the deal I would have lost my shares. I would have had to sign a 10-year non-compete clause that was transferable. So I couldn't sign it and they threatened to fire me if I didn't. They had enough votes on the board of course, so when I didn't sign it they fired me. That's the story. However, I am Defiant. (chuckle) I can do it again. I have no trouble going out this time and raising the money without any strings attached."

The Rumors

The rumor on the street has been that while Shooter is a strong storyteller he is not a strong marketer. People are wondering how much Shooter really had to do with the brilliant marketing at Valiant that had propelled the company forward. We confronted Shooter with this: "That's nonsense. I was involved with everything. Possibly a majority of the things we did in terms of marketing were mine. I can tell you this — every word of every solicitation (that's the descriptive paragraph you see in mags like **Advance Comics** and **Previews** — Rob), every word of advertising during the time I was at Valiant was written by me. We didn't have that many people. Everybody contributed. I think the company line there now is that Jim didn't really do anything. Jim worked eighteen hours a day for 365 days a year. It's like history is being rewritten."

Thanks, Jim. Good luck.

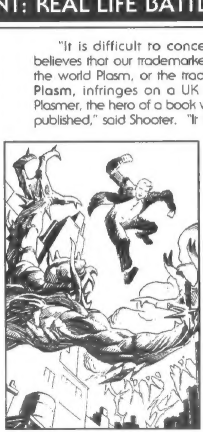
Plasm TM & © 1993 Enlightened Entertainment, Ltd.

MARVEL vs. DEFIANT: REAL LIFE BATTLE!

A lawsuit charging Defiant with trademark infringement has been filed in United States District Court, Southern District in Manhattan by Marvel Comics Limited, the U.K. Division of Marvel. Shooter last locked horns with Marvel's current chairman, Ronald Perelman, in 1988 when both Shooter and Perelman were suitors for the company. This lawsuit seeks a preliminary injunction on an expedited basis. If the court grants this motion, Defiant will have to stop using the word "Plasm" in all publishing and promotion until the court has the time to consider a permanent injunction.

Marvel's suit maintains that the name "Plasm" infringes on its alleged trademark rights, first claimed in the United Kingdom for a character, Plasmer. The comic book series which features the character has not appeared and is not scheduled to appear in this country until **Plasmer #1** comes out in September. Last month we told you that Defiant had attempted to appease Marvel by changing **Plasm** to **Warriors of Plasm**. Guess that didn't work, eh?

"It is difficult to conceive how Marvel believes that our trademarked title, named for the world Plasm, or the trademark **Warriors of Plasm**, infringes on a UK character called Plasmer, the hero of a book which has yet to be published," said Shooter. "It is easier to believe that they are simply concerned about our fast take-off in a market they dominate. They are aggressive competitors and turf warriors and this type of 'spoiler' behavior right at the beginning of our launch is a classic Marvel technique. We intend to fight this in both the courts of law and public opinion."



Dark Dominion TM & © 1993 Enlightened Entertainment, Ltd.

VANTAGE QUICKIES

DEFIANT: Vantage has learned that the print run of **Warriors of Plasm** #1 is just over a half million. That's a little high. The book can go up, but comics are like hot air balloons. The bigger it is, the more heat you need to get it off the ground. Defiant's next title is **Dark Dominion** which asks, what if scary things really do happen when you turn the lights off in your bedroom? This will be the story of a man who can see those scary things. Writing by Shooter almost guarantees a great book. Also, look for a lower print run on **Dark Dominion** #1 than there was on **Warriors of Plasm** #1, now that the hoopla of the Defiant launch is over. Jim Shooter's rep and amazing story-telling ability continue to fuel the Defiant fire. What we've read so far from Defiant we have enjoyed greatly, and reading enjoyment is so important for investment value. Defiant looks good.

ROB LIEFELD: Extreme Studios is a group of artists who sometimes publish under the Image imprint. Until recently, Extreme Studios included Rob Liefeld, Brian Murray, Dan Fraga, Chuck Jones, and a few others. Rob is leaving Extreme, which he co-founded just a couple of years ago. Liefeld is cutting back the work he does for Image — he'll work on **Youngblood** and occasional other items. Rumor has it he's stepping out of the spotlight so he can return with a big splash and a new style several months down the road. Image note: The Maxx has been reinstated as an Image title since our last issue.

DC: Batman #500, the big culmination of the Knightfall hoopla, was ordered nicely with an estimated run of around 1.5 million copies. This is very high, but it also makes sense since the story has been so popular. What's weird is that in the same month **Justice League Task Force** #5 continues with Bruce Wayne's adventures and sources say only about 200,000 were ordered. Hmmm. **Lobo** is getting his own series from **DC** in a couple of months. Watch for increased demand on key back issues: **Omega Men** #3 (first Lobo), **Omega Men** #10 (first full story), and **Lobo** #1 (mini).

VALIANT: The average Valiant book had been selling about 300,000 copies per month when the **Turok Scare** hit (**Vantage** #3). Some speculators jumped ship, and some dealers (who have to order two months in advance) were stuck with too many recent Valiants. That's why you see some recent issues in the bargain boxes. Valiant's new challenge: Through heavy marketing, masterful storytelling, unannounced cameos, etc., can Valiant do it again? They may surprise advance-orderers who will be cautiously ordering low. Valiant is run by people who know how to manipulate the market. Don't count them out yet.

Valiant has come up with these wacky 3D glasses. They'll work on anything, but they work better on comics that have been specially colored. These specially colored comics will look normal to the human eye. **Solar** #29-30 will feature this "Valiant Vision" coloring. Plus, #28-29 will feature Solar the Destroyer, the Solar-half that went into space in issue #23. The mini-series for Solar the Destroyer has been cancelled by Valiant, though they had originally said it was for sure. The story of the mini will, however, run through **Solar** #32-34. **Secret Weapons** #5 has potential, as it will feature an appearance of Ninjak and it will lead into next month's **Ninjak** #1.

Important: We now know that **Ninjak** will be by the powerhouse artist Joe Quesada! This guy is an awesome artist, super hot, and **Ninjak** #1 will probably be a real shot in the arm for Valiant. **Bloodshot** #6 and #7 look great.

HARBINGER

We told you two issues ago that the **Harbinger** team was to be reorganized, with everyone but Faith leaving the team for good. The Harbinger foundation will suddenly be Harada-less. Someone will step forward to use the Harbinger Foundation as a tool for good; Faith will join the Foundation.

EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS/ ENTITY COMICS: This Publisher is drawing some attention to itself by adding some big name talent to its roster. Entity has a Sam Kieth "Chromium Card" planned for insertion into two October #1's: **Zen Intergalactic Ninja: The Hunted** #1 and **Young Zen** #1. Watch for Joe Lee to do some work for Entity in the near future!

Lobo and related artwork TM & © 1993 D C Comics
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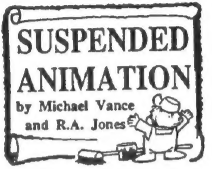
COMICS ARE FOR READING FIRST!



Why read comics?

I sat down into the solid reality of a Sunday and fell back and away into 1958; into a boy of eight, excited and afraid, proud and trembling with guilt, holding my book report with sweating hands.

Today, I cannot remember the vast sea of faces comprised of hostile teacher and bored students that frightened that eight year old. But I remember vividly the words that brought a lump into my throat and ignited thirty-one years of wonder and joy.

"Scientific people know very well that time is only a kind of space. We can move forward and backward in space. To prove this theory, I invented a machine to travel through time."

Something powerful gripped my heart and pumped blood through my body. The words sent waves of electricity through my imagination.

". . . and I think that I like this book very much," I said. The teacher nodded and the class fidgeted. But I was resolved. With this marvelous machine, I set out to explore literature.

I first conquered Wells' novels. I seasoned those with Superman!, Wonder Woman!, Flash! and every super-hero comic written with exclamation points. Unsatiated, I consumed Charles Dickens, Victor Hugo, Jules Verne, Edger Rice Burroughs, and The Bible. After a feast of words, I graduated from college with a degree in English.

My God! I was a grammar glutton!

Why read comics? To ignite the fire.

A growing number of people are discovering comics they'll enjoy reading. If you have a question or comments, or can't find a book reviewed, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: 1427 S. Delaware Ave, Tulsa OK 74104

WINNER: The Vantage Excellence in Reading Award: PRIME!

Prime reminds Vantage of the old Stan Lee Spider-Man. This hero is real — he's got the bad guys to deal with, yes, but he's also a boy trying to cope with living in a man's body. Writers Gerard Jones and Len Strazwski show that the inexperience of youth and the power of a superhero don't always mix. Prime is a telling comic book. Vantage can't wait to see Prime meet Clinton in #6!

Welcome to the Vantage "Excellence in Reading Award"! Our plan is to use this space to highlight the best in up-and-coming comic book reading! Winners will be chosen based on Vantage staff opinions and on YOUR letters! Let us know what you like to read!

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WE SAID IT, IT HAPPENED:

"Top Pick of the Month"
— **Vantage** on the **Plasm** Album **before** it came out!

"Top Pick of the Month"
— **Vantage** on **Shadowman** #16 when it was still at **cover price in many stores!**

"Top Pick of the Month!"
— **Vantage** on **Bloodshot** #6-7 before #7 came out & when #6 was still available in many stores at cover price!

VANTAGE VIEWPOINTS

". . . never miss an issue of Vantage! You can 'bet the farm' that I never will!"
— Ron Hutchinson, Earlville, IL

"My local dealer got Vantage because I told him I would destroy him if he didn't!"
— Theo Vallejo, Sparks, NV

"Congratulations on Vantage! It's exciting to see a small company come along and offer information that is useful, accessible, and less expensive!"
— Shanon O'Barr (address withheld)

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For changes other than small corrections and minor adjustments, we will keep you updated.